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ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY

Letter dated 2 September 1993 from the President of the Economic and Social Council to the President of the General Assembly

The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1993/23 of 27 July 1993, which was adopted on the recommendation of the Commission for Social Development, approved the attached draft resolution entitled "International Year of the Family", for transmission to the General Assembly for its adoption.

The draft resolution contains several provisions which call for immediate action, including some during the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, in prior consultation with Member States. One such recommendation is contained in paragraph 14, in which the Assembly would decide "to devote one of its plenary meetings at its forty-eighth session, in early December 1993, to launching the International Year of the Family"; another is contained in paragraph 20, requesting the Secretary-General "to seek the views of Member States of the Commission for Social Development on the desirability to work out a declaration on the role, responsibilities and rights of families on the occasion of the International Year of the Family".

Should the draft resolution, according to normal procedures, be submitted to the General Assembly for action at its forty-eighth session, it would not be acted upon until the Assembly considers the report of the Economic and Social Council during the latter part of its forty-eighth session. This would leave very little time to take adequate preparatory steps for the Assembly's launching of the International Year of the Family in early December 1993. Therefore, it is of special urgency that the Assembly give earlier consideration to the draft resolution than under its routine procedures.

Further to consultations with the Coordinator for the International Year of the Family, I wish to propose that, because of the exigencies of the situation, the draft resolution be acted upon by the General Assembly at one of its last meetings of the forty-seventh session, thereby greatly facilitating the preparatory process to the International Year of the Family. I have been informed that, in August, the matter of an earlier action on the resolution had been presented to the chairman of the regional groups by the Coordinator for the Year during his visit to New York and that they had consented to brief their respective groups in detail on the matter.

I should be grateful to Your Excellency for your prompt consideration of tha matter and for your concurrence that we take up this resolution at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Juan SOMAVIA
President
Economic and Social Council

Annex

Draft resolution recommended by the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly for adoption

International Year of the Family

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolutions 44/82 of 8 December 1989, 45/133 of 14 December 1990 and 46/92 of 16 December 1991 concerning the International Year of the Family, as expressions of the determination of the peoples of the United Nations to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Recalling that major United Nations instruments on human rights and social policy, as well as relevant global plans and programmes of action, call for the widest possible protection and assistance to be accorded to the family,

Convinced that equality between the sexes, women's equal participation in employment and shared parental responsibility are essential elements of modern family policy,

Conscious of the existence of various concepts of the family in different social, cultural and political systems,

Aware, at the same time, that families are the fullest reflection, at the grass-roots level, of the strengths and weaknesses of the social and developmental welfare environment, and as such offer a uniquely comprehensive and synthesizing approach to social issues,

Realizing that families, as basic units of social life, are major agents of sustainable development at all levels of society, and that their contribution to that process is crucial for its success,

Stressing that the observance of the International Year of the Family in 1994 will immediately precede the celebration by the family of nations of the historic fiftieth anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the state of preparations for the International Year of the Family, 21/

1. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General on the state of preparations for the International Year of the Family;

21/ E/CN.5/1993/3.

2. Expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for a well-coordinated and impressive effort in the preliminary and preparatory phases to the Year, despite resource constraints, and for the considerable progress made towards its observance;

3. Notes with satisfaction that the Year has gained increasing support at all levels, and that the preparatory process has enhanced and strengthened the substantive orientation of the Year;

4. Commends all Governments, specialized agencies, regional commissions and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations which have undertaken special efforts to prepare for the observance of the Year;

5. Urges Governments, specialized agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, especially those which have not yet done so, to intensify the efforts undertaken, including the identification of national coordinating mechanisms and elaboration of national programmes of action, in the preparations for and observance of the International Year of the Family;

6. Welcomes the holding in 1993 of four regional and interregional preparatory meetings for the Year, organized by the Secretariat for the International Year of the Family in the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, in close cooperation with the regional commissions, and hosted by the Governments of China, Colombia, Malta and Tunisia;

7. Notes with interest the proposal by the Government of Slovakia that the Bratislava International Centre for Family Studies be affiliated with the United Nations;

8. Also notes with interest the results of the Expert Group Meeting on the Social Consequences of Population Growth and Changing Social Conditions, with Particular Emphasis on the Family, 22/ co-sponsored by the Government of Germany and held at Vienna from 21 to 25 September 1992;

9. Welcomes also the active involvement of non-governmental organizations in the preparatory process for the Year, including the major global initiative to convene a world non-governmental organization forum entitled "Launching the International Year of the Family, 1994: Strengthening Families for the Well-being of Individuals and Societies", to be held at Valetta, Malta, from 28 November to 2 December 1993, and calls upon all those concerned to support the event in every possible manner;

10. Expresses its special gratitude to Governments and other donors, especially those in the private sector, which have generously responded to earlier appeals to contribute resources to the Voluntary Fund for the International Year of the Family;

22/ See E/CN.5/1993/6.

11. Appeals to all Governments concerned and all other prospective donors to pledge their contributions to the Voluntary Fund, notably during the pledging segments and interregional preparatory meetings in 1993, with a view to releasing new funds for specific family-oriented projects, particularly in developing countries, during both the Year and its follow-up;

12. Invites policy-making organs of specialized agencies and other bodies in the United Nations system to consider, in the context of their substantive mandates, the principles and objectives of the Year and follow-up action to the Year for the benefit of the families of the world;

13. Also invites organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system to include in their programme budgets for 1994 and 1995, as appropriate, programme elements for the observance of and follow-up to the Year;

14. Decides to devote one of its plenary meetings at its forty-eighth session, in early December 1993, to launching the International Year of the Family;

15. Also decides that, beginning in 1994, 15 May of every year shall be observed as the International Day of Families;

16. Requests the Commission on Human Rights, the Population Commission and the Commission on the Status of Women to include in the agendas for their sessions in 1993 or 1994 consideration of the principles and objectives of the Year in the context of their major areas of concern, and to propose specific follow-up measures regarding human rights, population issues and the advancement of women as each affects or is affected by families, including family-oriented components of the World Conference on Human Rights, to be held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993, the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held at Cairo from 5 to 13 September 1994, the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in Denmark in 1995, and the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, to be held at Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995;

17. Decides to devote two plenary meetings at its forty-ninth session, in 1994, to the implementation of the follow-up to the Year, and to designate those meetings as an international conference on families, which should take place at an appropriate global policy-making level and in keeping with the procedures and practices of the General Assembly;

18. Appeals to Member States as well as to all other participants in the observance of the Year to highlight 1994 as a special event benefiting families of the world in their quest for a better life for all, based on the principle of subsidiarity, which seeks solutions to problems at the lowest level of the societal structure;

19. Calls for a concerted promotional and information campaign on behalf of the Year at the national, regional and international levels, with strong participation of the mass media;

20. Requests the Secretary-General:

(a) To seek the views of member States of the Commission for Social Development on the desirability to work out a declaration on the role, responsibilities and rights of families on the occasion of the International Year of the Family;

(b) To plan adequate resources, including staff, through redeployment in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995, with a view to ensuring effective observance of and follow-up to the Year, commensurate with its important principles and objectives;

(c) To continue taking specific measures, through all the communication media at his disposal, particularly within the mandates of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, to give widespread publicity to the preparations for and observance of the Year, and to increase the dissemination of information on the subject;

(d) To report on the observance of the Year at the national, regional and international levels, and to submit specific proposals on the follow-up to the Year, including a draft plan of action, if deemed appropriate, to the Assembly at its fiftieth session;

21. Decides to consider the question of the International Year of the Family at its fiftieth session, on the basis of a report of the Secretary-General under the agenda item entitled "Social Development".